

**House Standing Committee on Tourism and Outdoor Recreation  
The Henry Ford – Dearborn, Michigan  
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Testimony from Annmarie Erickson  
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The Detroit Institute of Arts is considered to be among the top six encyclopedic art museums in the United States, meaning our collection spans the timeline of human creativity from antiquity to the current day. In calendar year 2014, more than 630,000 people visited the DIA. Those visitors attended special exhibitions, enjoyed live music in Rivera Court on Friday nights, marveled at the DIA's permanent collection galleries and spent time gazing at the physical and emotional heart of the museum, Diego Rivera's Detroit Industry murals. The murals have been declared a National Historic Landmark by the United States Parks Service, and each year the museum – and the murals – attract visitors from around the world. Last year, we hosted visitors from 55 different countries including Brazil, Norway, Turkey, England, Denmark, Ukraine, Australia, Costa Rica, France and Singapore –just to name a few. We also welcomed visitors from 47 of the 50 states, and many, many friends from Canada.

We are currently in the early weeks of a major exhibition, which provides an opportunity for the museum to expand its reach thanks to a “blockbuster” exhibition and a much larger marketing budget than usual. *Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in Detroit* opened to the public a month ago. The exhibition focuses on the eleven months the couple spent in Detroit during which time Rivera studied the Ford Rouge plant, planned and painted the murals. Detroit was also pivotal for Kahlo as she began to refine her highly personal style of painting after a tragic miscarriage at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. The two took Detroit by storm and the exhibition is having an equally strong impact, with 50,000 visitors in the first five weeks. We anticipate that 200,000 people will see the exhibition before it closes in July, and it's worth noting that the entire exhibition is bilingual – English and Spanish – to ensure we reach the broadest possible audience.

The DIA is actively marketing Diego and Frida in southeast Michigan, Flint and Grand Rapids. We have extended our campaign to Toledo, Chicago, Toronto and Windsor, utilizing print, broadcast and on-line media. In addition; the museum provided the opportunity for journalists from several major publications to visit the exhibition and Detroit prior to the public opening. We hosted journalists from The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Boston Globe, The Economist, Art and Antiques and Art in America, resulting in positive media coverage about the exhibition, the museum and our city.

The media tour and our on-going campaign also resulted in coverage on Public Radio International's The World, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Toledo Blade, St. Louis Dispatch, National Public Radio's All Things Considered, Conde Nast Traveler, Vogue, Huffington Post, Los Angeles Times, and in news outlets in

Mexico, Chile, Germany and Cuba. These media placements will certainly bolster our attendance, but they also promote the museum and Michigan as a place where cultural tourism is thriving.

People often debate the veracity of economic impact surveys, and I will not try and estimate the impact of this exhibition on Detroit. I can, however, relate a number of anecdotes from Midtown Detroit restaurants and retail outlets that prove the power of a major exhibition. A clothing retailer in the Park Shelton building across from the DIA opened a second store in the building called "Frida." She tells me she can't keep the Frida Kahlo socks in stock. The owner of a new restaurant in the same building is pushing his opening to take advantage of the increased traffic spurred by Diego and Frida, and another Midtown restaurateur reported to me that his Thursday, Friday and Saturday business have experienced a significant uptick since the exhibition opened. The DIA worked with both city and suburban restaurants to create specialty food items and cocktails and has been actively promoting these partnerships.

The DIA also engaged with cultural and community organizations from around metropolitan Detroit, encouraging them to jump on the Diego and Frida bandwagon with individual programming themed to the exhibition. The resulting programs included a production of the FRIDA opera by the Michigan Opera Theater, which was performed at venues in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties with the DIA's support. It was the first time an opera was staged in Macomb County and the two performances at Macomb Community College sold out! Birmingham's Baldwin Public Library has screened the movie, Frida, and held book club meetings on Diego and Frida. Detroit's Music Hall presented a tribute to Latin music and today's host organization, The Henry Ford, is presenting its Rouge Factory tour, showing visitors the manufacturing might that inspired Rivera's murals. This exhibition has produced new partnerships, collaborations and great programming throughout the area.

The community partnerships illustrate most clearly that we are bigger, stronger and provide greater benefits to our region and state when we gather together around a common goal. The Detroit Institute of Arts is proud to support your efforts to bring tourism to Michigan and looks forward to future opportunities to promote Detroit and Michigan to an even wider audience.

In closing, I would like to encourage you to "stay tuned" as we will soon be releasing information on an on-going, state-wide program designed to share the DIA with all of Michigan's residents.